



## GROUND RULES

- Forum for sharing the Dhamma based on Bhante Punjabi’s translations and interpretations;
- Explore from a modern, scientific, and experiential perspective;
- Welcome to compare translations but strictly no debate;
- We are here to share our understanding of Bhante’s translations and interpretations.

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## Synopsis

- ⌘ Saññā (sensation) & Vedanā (feeling);
- ⌘ Saṅkhāra (mental construction);
- ⌘ Viññāna (perception);
- ⌘ Five Constituents of the Process of Perception (Pañca-khandha).

This understanding of Saññā & Vedanā is at the core of many of Bhante's explanations – Arūpa Samādhi (Saññā Vedayita Nirodha), Paṭicca-Samuppāda...

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## What is "Truth"


**Level 3**  
**Page 84**  
**(Page 85)**

If truth is one, and no second exists  
Debates will never arise among folk  
A variety of truths they themselves do form  
Gurus therefore never speak of one truth  
Ekaṃ hi saccaṃ na dutiyamatthi  
Yasmiṃ pajā no vivade pajānaṃ,  
Nānā te saccāni sayam thunanti  
Tasmā na ekaṃ samanā vadanti

Never was there a variety of truths  
**Other than sensations always in the world**  
Creating views using speculative logic  
They speak of a duality: falsehood and truth  
Na heva saccāni bahuni nānā  
Aññatra saññāya niccāni loke,  
Takkañca diṭṭhisu kapappayitvā  
Saccaṃ musāti dvayadhammāhu

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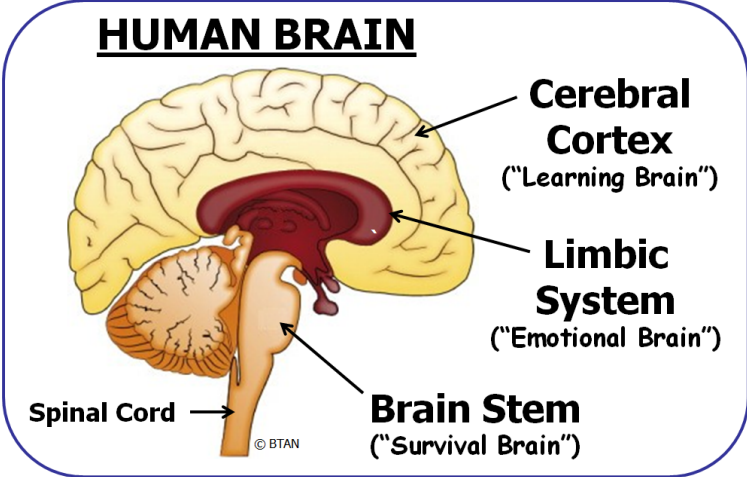




## OUR EVOLVING BRAIN


Our brain evolved over millions of years into **3 main layers**:

### HUMAN BRAIN




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## The Experience of "Seeing"

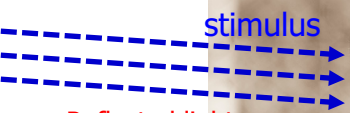
- Experience arises dependent on the presence of necessary conditions:



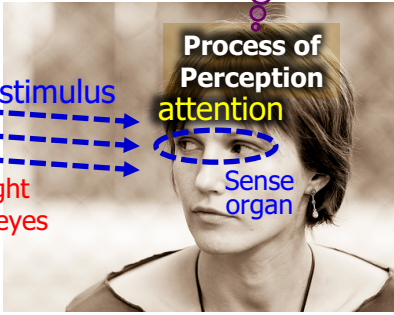
Light source




Reflected light entering the eyes



stimulus

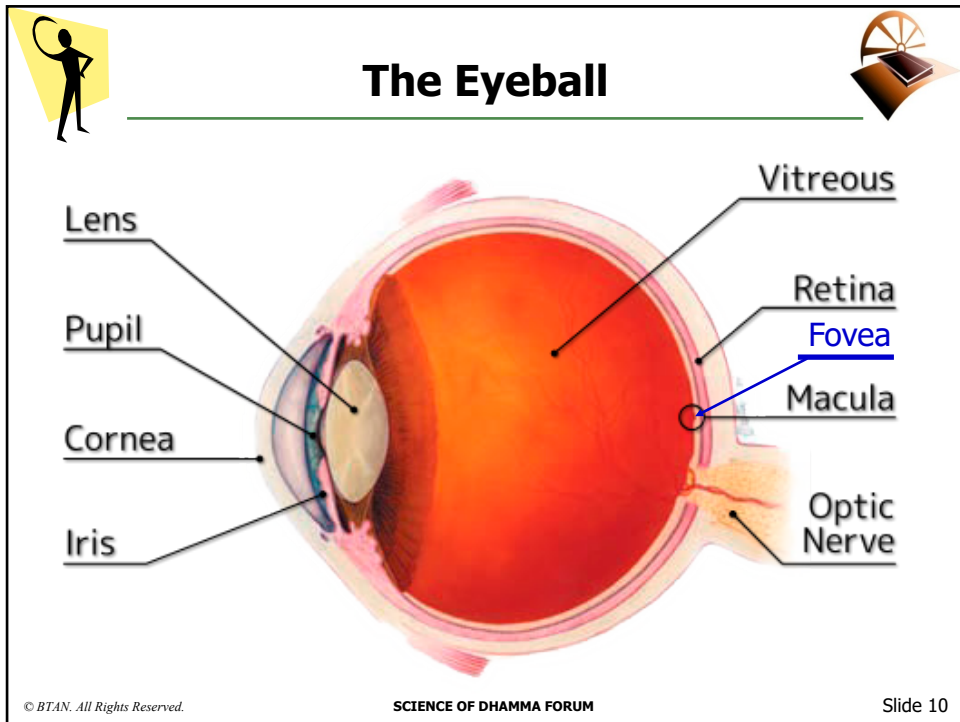
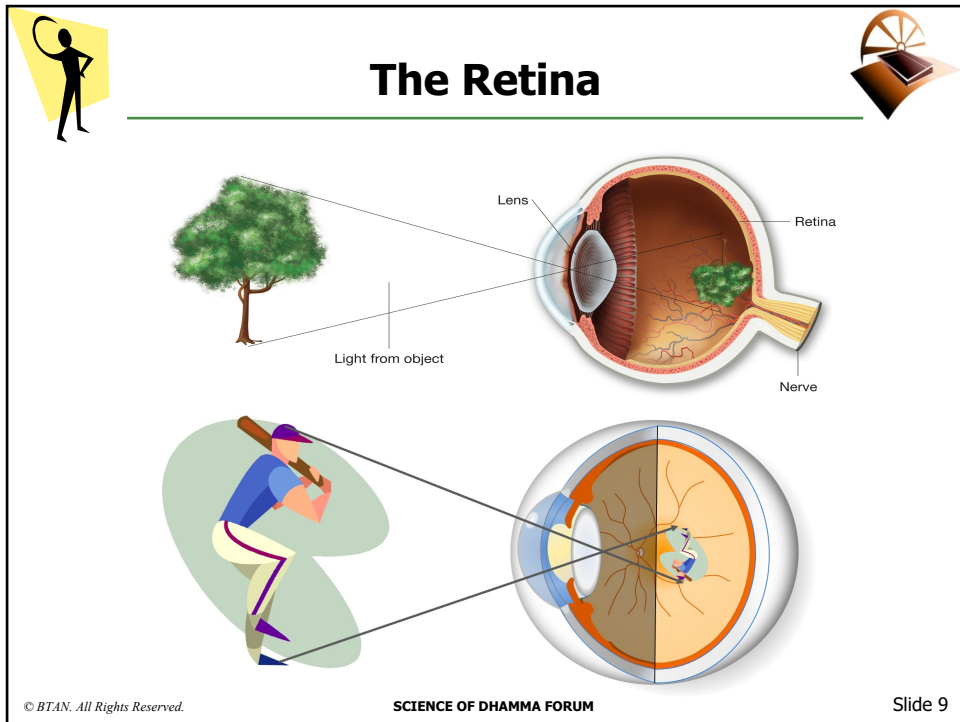


Process of Perception  
**attention**  
Sense organ



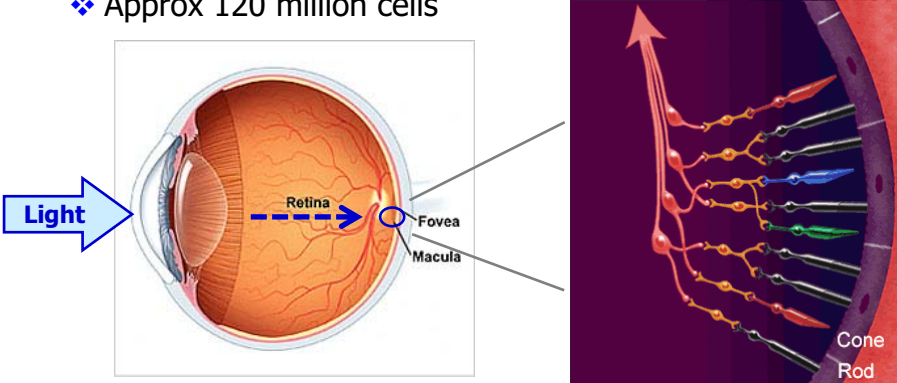
Mental Image

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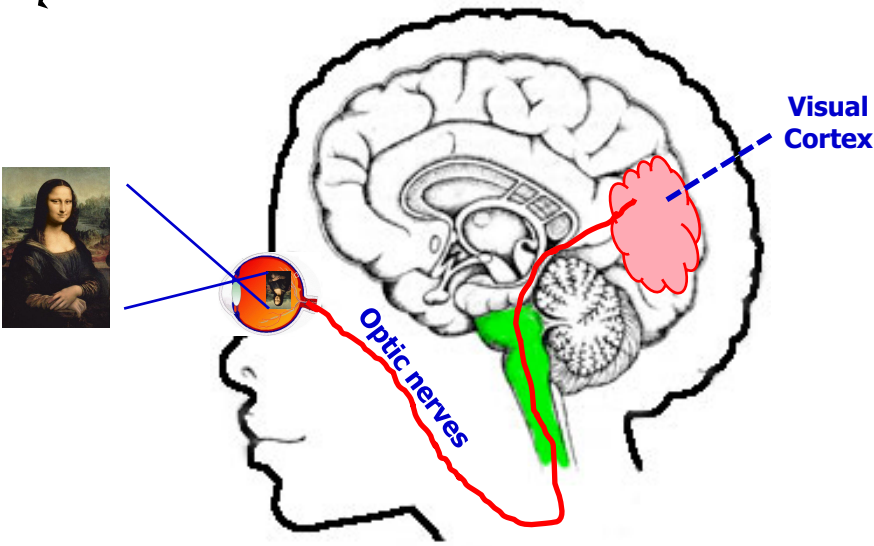
## MENTAL CONSTRUCTION: SIGHT

- ❖ Rod cells sense shades of gray, blurry images
- ❖ Cone cells sense specific wavelengths (red, green, blue)
- ❖ Each stimulated cell sends individual impulse to the brain
- ❖ Approx 120 million cells



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## Optic Nerves



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## Page 62 & Page 117 (124)



### Page 62 (62):

What we call an experience is a mental process of perception and conception that begins at the five sense bases and is carried to the brain as the sixth sense through nerve impulses. Though we call it a mental process it is really a physical activity. Experience as understood normally is of two kinds: 1) subjective experience and 2) objective experience.

### Page 117 (124):

EYE: is stimulated by light in the environment coming in the form of electromagnetic waves.



## Page 118 (125)



If we consider the sense of sight, what is perceived by the eye is only a visual image (rūpa). The image is produced when the body reacts to the stimulus and so experiences a feeling (vedanā) and a sensation (saññā). Sensation (saññā) refers to the "colour," and feeling (vedanā) refers to the pleasantness or unpleasantness of the colour.

In the case of hearing, sensation (saññā) refers to the nature of the sound, and feeling (vedanā) refers to the pleasantness or unpleasantness felt in the ear.

Sensation (saññā) is always accompanied by feeling (vedanā) and so they are inseparable. Sensation and the feeling are reactions of the organism to stimulation by the environment.

Sensation and feeling become the **raw material** used for the construction of mental images by the thinking part of the brain.



## Sensation of Colours



- The simple act of seeing a colour triggers a **spontaneous reaction** in the central nervous system - this is automatic;
- It isn't caused by any association, but by the wavelength of the colour;
- Objects reflect light at different wavelengths, and our brain interprets these wavelengths as different colours;
- Blue (the shortest wavelength) through green and yellow, to red (the longest wavelength);
- The long wavelengths (red & orange) are said to **arouse the nervous system** - heartrate and blood pressure increase.
- The short wavelengths (blue & violet) are meant to **relax the nervous system**.

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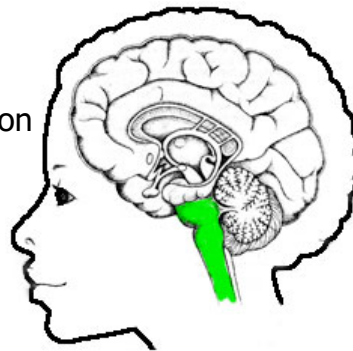
## THE PROCESS OF PERCEPTION



**PAÑCA-KHANDHA** (traditionally "the 5 aggregates")

### **The 5 Constituents of the Process of Perception**

1. **Vedanā** – Feeling
2. **Saññā** – Sensation
3. **Saṅkhāra** – Mental Construction
4. **Viññāna** – Perception
5. **Rūpa** – Mental Image




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## SENSE STIMULATION




Environmental activities stimulate the sense organs:


- **SIGHT:** Reflected light stimulates cone and rod cells in the retina;
- **HEARING:** Air vibration stimulates the ear-drum;
- **TOUCH:** Pressure, temperature, vibration, chemicals stimulate tactile sensory receptors under the skin;
- **SMELL:** Odorant molecules bind to receptor cells in the olfactory bulb;
- **TASTE:** Flavour molecules react chemically with gustatory sense receptors in the taste buds;

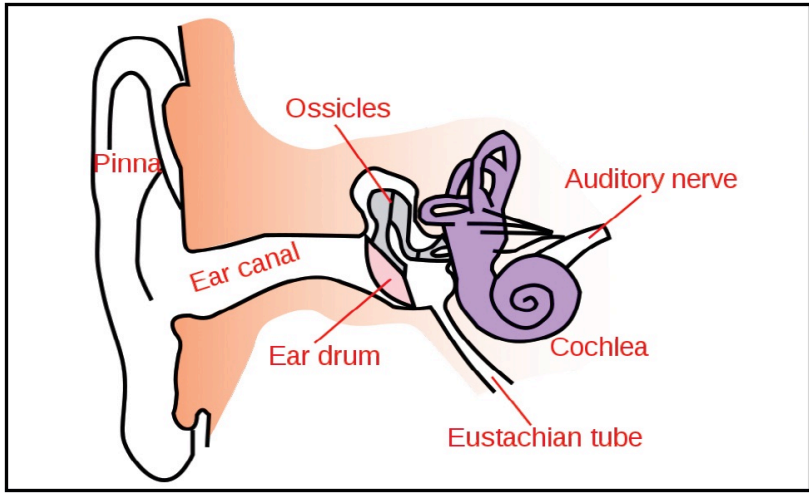
❑ **Stimulations trigger sensation ("saññā") and arouse feeling ("vedanā") in nervous system.**

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## Ear Canal





The diagram illustrates the internal structure of the human ear. It shows the external ear (pinna) leading to the ear canal, which ends at the ear drum. Behind the ear drum are the three ossicles (bones) that transmit sound vibrations. These vibrations are then sent to the cochlea, a spiral-shaped structure that converts sound into electrical signals. These signals are carried by the auditory nerve to the brain. The Eustachian tube is also shown, which helps maintain air pressure in the middle ear.

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## Touch Receptors under the Skin

*Sense Organs in the Skin*

thermo-receptor Sensing Temperature  
 Meissner's corpuscle Sensing Vibration  
 nociceptor Sensing Pain  
 pacinian corpuscle Sensing Pressure

epidermis  
dermis  
hypodermis

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## SIX SENSUAL REALMS (*Salāyatana*)

**COGNITION**



**Mano**

PRESENT PAST  
←.....→

**Rūpa** Sight  
**Sadda** Sound  
**Gandha** Smell  
**Phoṭṭhabba** Touch  
**Rasa** Taste

**Cakkhu** Reflected light falling on my eyes  
**Ghāna** Odor reaching my nose  
**Jivhā** Flavour reaching my tongue  
**Sota** Air vibration reaching my ears  
**Kāya** Tangibles stimulating touch receptors

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## Page 118 (125)

This construction process (sankhāra) is a mental activity. The result of this activity of construction is the formation of the mental images, which are **perceived** (viññāṇa). From moment to moment, every mental image (rūpa) that arises fades away to be replaced by another mental image that arises. This happens in a continuous manner, **making us feel the continuity to be seen as a static existence.**

Since a multiplicity of objects are present in a complex mental image, a differentiation between one object and another becomes necessary in the **process of perception** (viññāṇa).

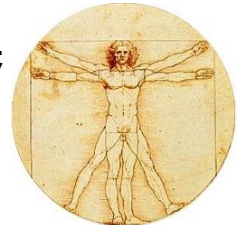
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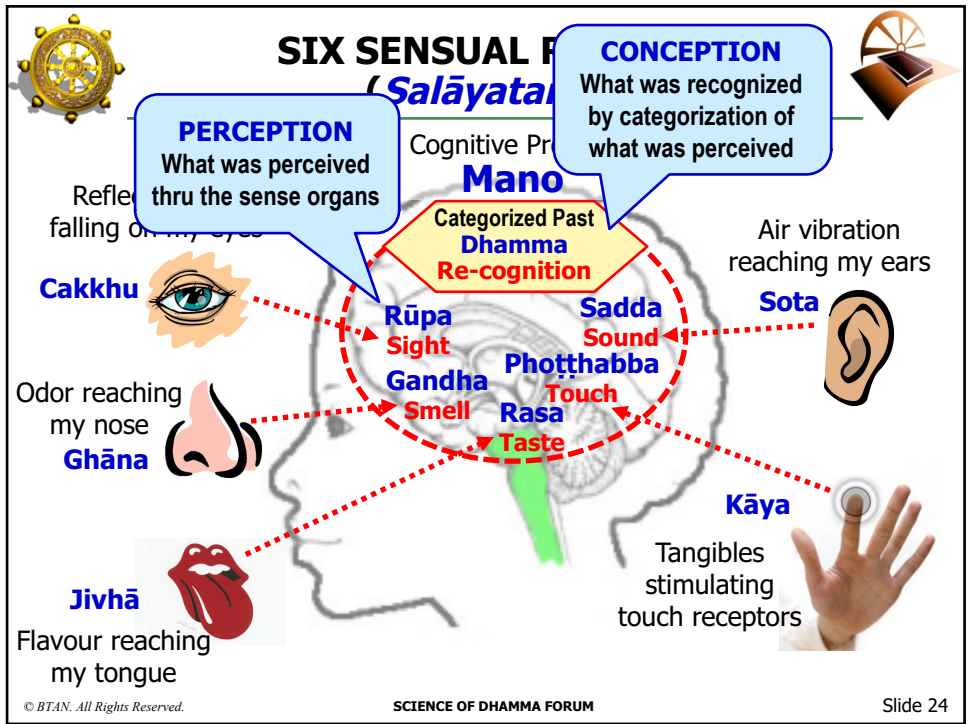
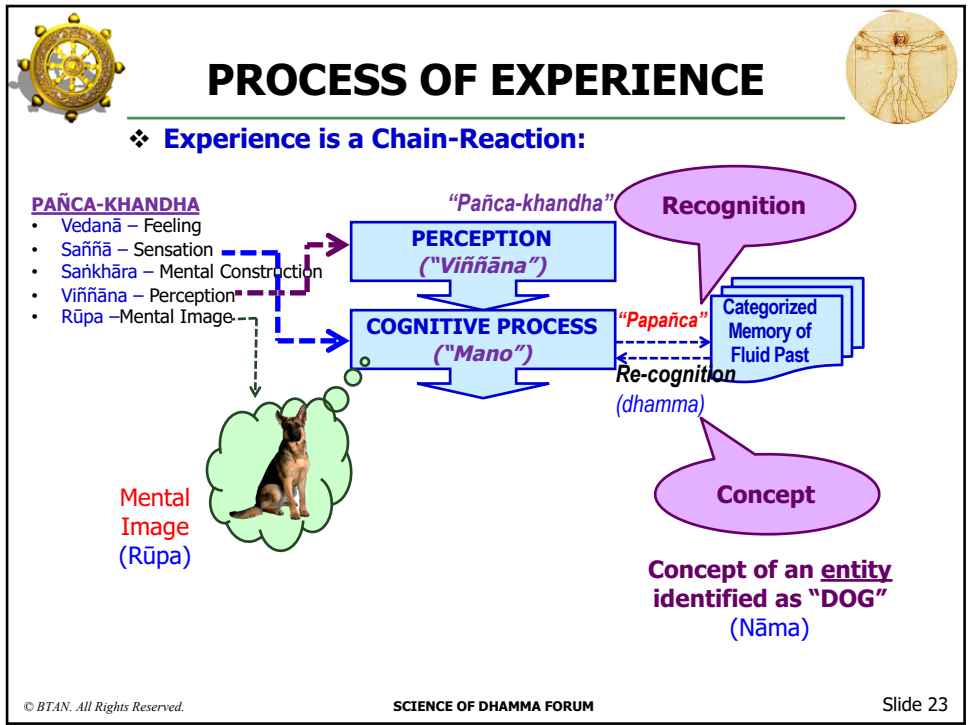
## MENTAL EXPERIENCE



### THREE PARTS OF MENTAL EXPERIENCES:

- **Viññāṇa** : Process of Perception
  - what is perceived through the sense organs;
- **Mano** : Cognitive Process
  - interpretation of the perception;
  - giving meaning to what was perceived;
- **Citta** : Affective Process
  - arousal of emotion leading to mental proliferation;
  - personalizing the experience with the notion there is a "self" to be affected.



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## SENSATION ("saññā")

❖ Stimulation of sense organ triggers nerve impulses or **sensation** ("saññā") in the nervous system carried to the brain:

- SIGHT: sensation refers to the sensing of wavelength ("colour") and intensity ("brightness") of the light stimuli;
- HEARING: sensation refers to the sensing of air vibration frequency ("pitch") and amplitude ("loudness");
- ...etc

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## FEELING ("vedanā")

❖ Sensation ("saññā") is always simultaneously accompanied by **feeling** ("vedanā") in the nervous system (inseparable):

- SIGHT: feeling refers to how the nervous system is irritated by long wavelengths (**red, orange, yellow**) and high intensity (**bright**) light, and soothed by short wavelengths (**blue, green**) and low intensity (**dim**) light;
- HEARING: feeling refers how the nervous system is irritated by high frequency (**pitch**) and **large amplitude** (loud) sound waves, and soothed by low frequency and soft mellow sound waves.

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